

GUIDE

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FAITH IS A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

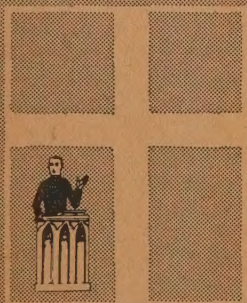
Wilma Senser

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Very Rev. Msgr. Charles J. McManus

HOW TO RUN AN INSTRUCTION CLASS

DECEMBER 1960, No. 153



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IT SEEMS TO ME

Where We Fail

The experience of the past few months should have taught American Catholics a valuable lesson. Over wide areas of our nation, people remain deplorably ignorant concerning the nature and intentions of the Catholic Church.

Bigotry, misunderstanding and enormous ignorance remain deep and widespread. Contrary to our comfortable assumption, we have not traveled as far as we thought from the anti-Catholicism of 1928. Since this is a patent fact, it is an advantage to have had it called so vividly to our attention.

Many Catholics have not been idle during these three decades. Numerous priests and lay people have been diligent and persevering in trying to make the Church better known among their neighbors. Nor have their efforts been totally unavailing. It would not be difficult to match evidences of bigotry and animosity with equally striking instances of understanding and good will. It would be grossly unfair either to forget the labor of those apostles or to underestimate its relative effectiveness.

With this important qualification, I find it difficult to argue with Donald Thorman of *Ave Maria* who comments wisely on this upsurge of anti-Catholicism.

"Obviously we have failed miserably," he believes, "to get to the American people even a faint image of what the Church is all about . . . how many of our non-Catholic neighbors see the Church as we see it—as the Mystical Body of Christ, Christ still living in and through His Church in the 20th century, Christ carrying out the work of our Redemption 20 centuries later through the work of His Church."

Nor do I think it possible to deny the justice of the same writer's diagnosis when he asserts: "At the heart of the matter seems to be our lack of missionary zeal. As a group we American Catholics simply do not take the apostolic demands of our religion seriously." The Apostolate to non-Catholics deserves better of our American people in the decades ahead.

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Faith Is A Personal Commitment

By Wilma Senser

Chicago played host to some 400 priests especially interested in winning converts during May 30-June 1, 1960. The Conference on Adult Catechetics was a huge success and was sponsored by the Foundation for Adult Catechetics and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of Chicago.

A bright highlight of the conference was a panel discussion, "Our Impression of Convert Instructions," in which three converts participated. We are happy to present one of the papers from that discussion. The writer became a Catholic in 1948 and is an instructor at Wilson Junior College in Chicago.

Initiation into the mysteries of Christ and the Church is always a marvelous thing, no matter what the circumstances.

My own circumstances were extremely fortunate. I was prepared for my entrance into the Church by a priest who not only engaged my intellect but who, more important, was himself such an example of the Christian life we talked about that during the years that have followed it has been he rather than anything that was said that I most vividly remember.

I remember the respect he always accorded me, a respect which was at the basis of the dialogue we carried on, a respect which showed in his desire to help me to communicate, however vaguely, the intellectual and spiritual needs that had brought me there. This was an exciting experience, my coming into the Church. And I was convinced that such ardor as mine would change the world.

Now that I am older, and after 12 years of living and working with Catholics, I realize that we make very little impact on the world, that we are not usually in the *avant-garde* of social, educational and political evolution. Now, after having met many converts and having visited their classes, I find that my own experience was the exception rather than the general practice. Instead of a respect for people seeking Christ, respect for their freedom to approach the Church through their own God-given resources, the usual convert classes

seem to be built around a quick and easy method of instruction which emphasizes: get them in, give them the facts—the rules and regulations—and baptize them.

The tone is set from the time of the initial invitation. One sees posters on "EI" platforms; letters sent from church clubs and parishes advising that one need not remain ignorant about the doctrines of the Catholic Church; that answers to one's fundamental questions can be obtained quickly and painlessly—the "huckster" approach. But people must be reached somehow, and I suppose that in a time when Christians no longer "amaze" by their preaching, by the example of their lives, converts will not themselves be drawn to the Church but must be sought.

My quarrel, however, is not simply with the methods of recruitment and instruction, but with the fact that the methods in use today indicate an attitude toward the content of the Faith and toward the individual inquirer that is disturbing. To show a yearly parish report which tells that 50, 100 or 200 adults were baptized is quite impressive; not so much so when it means that 50, 100 or 200 people have been sent into the world with the firm conviction that their mediocre, unchanged lives are now sanctified: a conviction based on an acceptance which often has very little to do with their own personal commitment to sanctity.

Any claim the Church has on us pro-

ceeds from Christ—we believe that the Church extends Christ throughout history; the influence of the Church depends on each man's commitment to this belief. Each individual, no matter how limited he might be, must make his own commitment to this Faith, to his life built around the Faith. This cannot be taught or parceled out: commitment cannot be learned. Any facts the priest can give in the convert class—the Trinity, Grace, the relationship of Christ to the Church—are facts that are vitally true for us only if we profoundly believe them to be true. This means that convert classes have to become the meeting ground where each man *seeks* truth rather than lecture classes which present *generalizations* about truth.

Convert classes are usually amazingly depressing gatherings. Reading and discussion material is usually confined to an inadequate, antiquated catechism which is built around an inadequate and insular question and answer method. The individual convert accepts the fact that angels are pure spirit, that there is purgatory to be gotten round, that the Trinity means three persons in one God, that he must observe certain rules and duties; mainly, attend Mass weekly, Communion and Confession often, that he must remain married to the same person and engage in family prayer. He is told other things of course. There are lessons on Grace, on the Trinity, on the purpose of human life—which give him a smattering of the theological concepts that priests have taken years of seminary training to become familiar with. But the presentation doesn't always make clear what is revelation and what is opinion, what is dogma and what is strictly custom. The rosary often becomes just as important as the Liturgy—the convert sees all as one great pasticcio which scarcely relates to his everyday life.

The convert sees his role in all this as simply that of giving a certain preordered response to a set of static rules. Faith is reduced to ritual, a matter of the right practices, the right responses. In his attempt to simplify, the priest sometimes furthers this attitude of blind acceptance. I've heard priests say: receive the sacraments, keep the commandments, and you will be assured a place in heaven for all eternity—a low premium insurance policy to guarantee eternal felicity.

No priest intends this kind of thing of course; but people are prone to simply accept the pronouncements of an authority in any area where the data seems beyond their comprehension. That these pronouncements remain meaningless until the individual makes them function in his life is difficult to understand unless one is made, initially, to see that this is an individual responsibility.

That the Faith is dynamic, not a static ritual—how can this be put across? Clearly, the answer is only through a medium which allows for and insists on individual freedom, on the necessity for personal commitment and only through a method in which there is a real dialogue between the priest and the people. To simply read from a catechism a question which has its own answer will not do. There are no end of answers, of solutions to the human approach to Christ. Again and again the priest must stress the point that Christ's dying has a direct meaning in men's lives; that the great sins are not simply against objective formulas (the negative *thou shall not*), but have to do also with one's personal turning away from one's life, one's failure to live according to the dictates of one's own conscience.

A PERSONAL RESPONSE

The priest cannot "teach" Faith; but he must set the atmosphere for its development. He must take into account the experiences of all the people before him. He must make them aware that they are coming to the convert class to add a new dimension to their lives, to struggle for life in order to affirm it. He must prod them, upset them, shake them from complacency. He must challenge them: why are you here? what do you want? He must make even the dullard among them formulate some idea of what he must do to follow Christ. They may be shocked, resentful and a bit afraid—afraid of the priest, who is after all a man apart from them—but they will be forced to respond.

And the priest must be ready to meet the response, even though it will not always be the response he would make. But the result will be a total response that is not cut and dried, one which is dynamic, an *alive* acceptance on the part of each person of Christ and of the Church—or no acceptance. The convert class will be a

"Convert classes are usually amazingly depressing gatherings. There is too little real dialogue."

place where the Christian takes perhaps the first steps toward the development of his own responsibility, it is that Christian life is a matter of communion with God and that struggle and witness are essential parts of it.

He will learn this in a community in which each member participates in a group dialogue. The priest and the people all help each other. This is what the Faith is—a communion; we don't have it unless we have it in communion. In a convert class in which people don't know each other's names, in which each is a separate little entity wrapped in his own private desires and apathy, in which each relates—and this in a mechanical way—only to the figure of authority, there is no communion.

All must be made to feel that each in his different way is there to seek one thing, that each is seeking initiation into a mystical union with God's People in Christ—which depends greatly for its life on each member. All must be made to feel the magnificence of a union which, under God, allows endless freedom for each individual member. This awareness is voided when the inquiry class itself is conducted on a noncommunal basis: the priest talks, the people listen; there is no human sharing. There is no seeking, no freedom.

Of course when one becomes a part of any institution one accepts its authority, one conforms, that is, to its laws and standards. But the authority which is vested in the Church never pretends always to give specific answers to life. To reduce the true teaching authority of the Church, which is a vital thing, to the static teacher-pupil, question and answer catechetical method is to assume that a set of general rules can cover the intricacies of Faith and the human response to it. This sort of reliance on an authority for answers in the convert class means that the people abdicate responsibility. But Christ does not ask whether one has been *told* to help the stranger, give shelter to the homeless. He asks this service of each of us as individuals.

And what better way to talk about the responsibility each has as a Christian than

through Christ. It would seem that the natural basis of inquiry for a convert class ought to be historical: Christ, the saints, the development of Tradition. The entire validity of the Church rests on an incident that took place in time. Yet the life of Christ and the incidents that have been the development of the Church in time play a small part in the catechism approach. Men cannot relate their lives directly to dogma, to abstract formulations. They must relate doctrine to their own history. Because convert teaching is too frequently removed from its basis in life, converts often see the whole as a kind of high ritual; real life, that is, the life of work, of political and social action, is something removed.

SCHOOL FOR SAINTS

This leads to the principal problem which convert teaching must solve, to the principal indictment against present methods. Convert classes do not breed saints. There is no ferment, no dissatisfaction with things as they are, but rather a rigid adherence to whatever exists—change, any attempt to disturb life is looked at askance. The great saints—John of the Cross, Theresa, Francis, Joan of Arc—were all innovators; (the saints of today are innovators—Dorothy Day, Gandhi); they were not content to accept things as they found them; they were all, in their way, non-conformists. No narrow, strictly defined approach to Christianity—in matters where Christ seeks our personal initiative—can give rise to the intellectual and spiritual disturbance which is at the heart of the Church's meaning.

Every convert will not rise to extraordinary heights; but the ideal must be there or he has no place to move toward, no goal by which to measure his efforts, no challenge even to make an effort. He must see that the affirmation of his whole existence is in the Cross which means that he cannot exchange suffering for security. The end of the inquiry begun in the convert class must mean a heightened personal responsibility to life, and to Christ our Lord.

This is the real objective of the convert

class—not merely to instruct, to prepare for Baptism, but to present the atmosphere and attitudes, to perpetuate the dialogue out of which saints can grow in the twentieth century. A lesser goal than this de-

values the central mission of the Church, and takes away from men their obligation to further in their lifetime the evolution away from mere existence toward ultimate life.

Audio-Visual Aids

By Very Rev. Msgr. Charles J. McManus

In His communications with man, God has always accommodated Himself to the psychology of man. In the Old Testament, for example, He used the rainbow as the symbol of His agreement with Noah after the Flood; one of the most dramatic Old Testament prophecies is connected with the Brazen Serpent; the Israelites in their journeyings were reassured of the protection of God through the Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night.

From this point of view, the Incarnation itself was the ultimate means God used to communicate with man in a manner proportioned to his psychology. The God-Man dramatizes the goodness and power of God in using spittle to touch the ears and tongue of a man who was deaf and dumb, and in using clay mixed with spittle to anoint the eyes of the man born blind, and employed common food in the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. Many sermons have been preached on the theme that material things will never be the same again, now that the Son of God has touched and used them. This theme has never been better exemplified than in the Sacraments. Through the Sacraments, Jesus bridged the gap between human psychology and the quite immaterial reality of Grace.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus the Teacher begins with the known in order to bring His hearers to the unknown, whether He is dealing with the educated

Nicodemus by night, or with the Samaritan woman at the well. The parables are prime examples of this. Notice how often Christ begins with the phrase, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like. . . ." A cursory examination of His discourse at the Last Supper recalls the lessons He taught through concrete images: He washes the feet of the Apostles; He describes heaven in terms of the parable of the many mansions; He employs the metaphor of the orphans ("I will not leave you orphans"), and of the vine ("I am the vine, you the branches"); He makes a comparison between one's friend and a servant; and He employs the vivid imagery of a woman in childbirth.

The same appeal to visual images in explaining doctrine can be found in St. Paul's doctrine of the "body of Christ, which is the Church," and in St. Peter's description of the Church as a "living temple" made up of "living stones."

The competent teacher in a classroom falls back on his own favorite analogies, and we probably remember best the teacher who was most expert in his use of analogies.

An outstanding example of this was the series of television shows produced for the Catholic Hour by the National Council of Catholic Men, entitled "What Catholics Believe About . . ." and featuring Father McQuade. In the course of a half-hour, Father McQuade moves from one analogy to another in an attempt to bring some glimmer of understanding regarding difficult doctrines like grace and other spiritual realities.

A paper delivered at a workshop during the Conference on Adult Catechetics, May 30-June 1, 1960 at Chicago. Monsignor McManus is director of St. Patrick's Information Center in New York City.

Visual and audio-visual aids are modern devices in the learning process which follow the same path as the teaching method employed by Our Lord Himself. They are accommodated to our psychology, and usually lead from the known to the unknown.

Before mentioning the types of audio-visual aids which are available, and the types which are used at St. Patrick's Information Center in New York, a few principles might be laid down to govern the use of such teaching aids.

1. In the first place, they must not take the place of the instruction; they are merely an aid to the instructor in his presentation of doctrine. Suppose, for example that an instruction class with a generous budget could afford to use the entire series of television films which were prepared by Father McQuade. It would still be necessary for the instructor to discuss the individual topics with those under instruction, and to make his own personal effort to impart this knowledge. The St. John's Film Strip Catechism even provides a lesson outline on the reverse of the envelope which holds the record, and the strip itself includes pictures and questions which will help the instructor to discover how much the class has absorbed. Nevertheless, these are merely helps or aids and they cannot be a substitute for the instructor's own teaching.

2. Secondly, these aids provide a change of pace for the class. No matter how excellent an instructor may be, and no matter how successful he may be in using the picture-language which carries doctrine into the minds of his students, they still appreciate being able to use their imagination and memory, and to enjoy the delights of sound and color in absorbing what they are being taught.

3. Thirdly, like all tools, aids must be adapted to the use of the instructor. Listen to two different instructors use the Paulist Mass Slides, and give their own commentary. The Mass remains the same; the succession of slides remains the same; but the bridge of commentary over which the doctrine of the Mass is carried to those in the class will be quite different. Each instructor must use only the aids which really help him. The experience of other instructors may be profitable in making up his mind which types of aid he will employ. Nevertheless, he alone will be using them,

and he must select only those which help him.

4. Finally, and this seems quite obvious, the use of visual aids must be planned so as to form a teaching whole with the instructor's own instructions and the other teaching aids which are used.

Now what types of visual and audio-visual aids are available?

The oldest and simplest is the *black-board*. You may have worked out a careful outline of the signs which are used in the Sacraments, and the sacramental graces which the Sacraments produce. You may mimeograph the outline, and put a copy in the hands of each student. This will not be a substitute, however, for you're creating the outline, item by item, on the black-board as you explain the various terms and the realities they represent.

There are those who use *charts* effectively. Monsignor John McFadden, who is in charge of the Catholic Information Center in Philadelphia, has a series of glass-covered frames scattered around his instruction classroom. Into these, at various points in the instruction schedule, he places professionally made charts of the doctrine he is explaining. Give him a pointer, and his equipment is complete for that class.

There are also centers which have all the facts, say on the formation of the Canon of the Bible, on *window shades* which remain permanently in front of the classroom and are pulled down as needed. Father Edward McLean of Hartford uses this medium to good advantage.

FILM STRIPS

The type of visual aid which combines budget-economy and the advantage of the picture which is worth ten thousand words is the film strip. In addition to the St. John's Series which includes recorded commentaries, musical background, and realistic sound effects, there are such items as the Eye Gate Series which are made up of excellent color photographs of the administration of the Sacraments and the celebration of Mass. No enumeration would be complete without mentioning Father William Quinlan's film strip on the Church. Briefly, when film strips are made up of color photographs, they can be excellent for illustration. When the art work

is good with possibly a story-line and even sound effects, they can be excellent in dramatizing analogies.

Slides, of course, have improved vastly in recent years. Slides of the Mass, for example, can provide those in the class with a "You are There" immediacy. Since the changing of the slides depends upon the instructor, he can tailor his commentary more effectively than if he tried to make all his points during a movie.

On the other hand it would be hard to equal, much less excel, the use of moving pictures. It is a more expensive operation to show them, since the projector is more costly and the unit of film is more expensive either to rent or to purchase. I have never used them in the regular instruction classes which lead to conversion, but I have had some experience with their use in attempting to provide inspiration and comprehension for people already in the Church. With high school youngsters, for example, a mission movie is more effective than a mission sermon; a vocation film easily makes them interested in the steps to the altar; a Christopher film makes them conscious of serious problems and the opportunities which they have for learning and applying wise solutions. At present, I plan to use some of the National Council Television series with Father McQuade for a series of "advanced classes" for converts, in an attempt to stimulate their questions and further reading.

THE OPAQUE PROJECTOR

Finally, a word should be said about the use of the opaque projector. This will take either a printed page, your own sketch, or any other material and throw it up on the screen. If you have the material properly prepared, you can make available to an entire class in a moment items which it would be costly to reproduce or difficult to distribute among all the members of a class. Also, a word about the use of a tape recorder. Much has already been said about tapes of instructions, especially their usefulness in making up classes which have been missed. Certainly, a tape recorder can give flexibility to an already recorded commentary for a film strip; and can capture on tape the commentary on the Mass which you would otherwise have to repeat again and again.

The rest of this paper will simply mention problems in the use of such aids; these problems can form the basis for the discussion of this workshop and stimulate questions from those who wish to participate.

The first problem is always that of a *budget*. Audio-visual aids are more or less expensive. Probably each priest who has used such aids will have his own preferences as to the best "buys" in the field. A priest must decide, in view of available funds, how to allocate the money between his reference and instruction library, the purchase of materials which he may give to his class free of charge, and such items as projectors.

The second problem is one of *selection*. Each instructor must take into account his own ability to incorporate such materials into his presentation of doctrine. For example, I find it helpful to use four film strips of the St. John's series: those on the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption and the Sacraments in General. When the class reaches the study of the Sacraments, there are two Sacraments which they find difficult to visualize. I therefore use the Eye Gate strips on Confirmation and Extreme Unction. For a pictorial description of the action of the Mass, the Paulist Mass Slides have been helpful.

Other factors which will influence the instructor in his choice of visual aids will be: (1) the particular needs of the people attracted to his own center or parish classes; (2) the number of lessons scheduled and the duration of each; (3) the danger of becoming too dependent upon such aids.

Suggested solutions for these problems may be found, first, in articles on catechetics and the available teaching aids in magazines published for priests. The current edition of the *Conference Bulletin* for New York priests includes an excellent article by Father Richard, formerly on the Confraternity staff, who now teaches catechetics in the Seminary. Secondly, the local Confraternity Office could serve as a clearing house for information on such materials, and for an evaluation of them. The CCD Office might also have a program for lending or renting such materials and the projectors to show them. In any case, the Confraternity might be able to advise the priest who phones or visits as to what aids other priests are using and what success

they're having with these materials. May I call your attention to the magazine *CAVE*, which publishes such evaluations and listings. The Catholic Audio-Visual Educator, whose initials spell the name of the publication, also issues frequent evaluations of new film strips and movies, and collects these evaluations into regularly published lists.

Thirdly, workshops, institutes on catechetics, and conferences on convert work can be extremely useful for an exchange of ideas and experiences on such topics, and for the encouragement of the priest who has never tried them.

Finally, there is no substitute for the experiments which each priest makes for himself.

How to Run An Instruction Class

The inquiry class is an adaptation of the ancient catechumenate. These classes have increased considerably in the U. S., especially within the last decade. The manner of conducting them varies considerably due to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. Priests who are eager to improve their method are always interested in how others conduct their classes.

This approach has been successful in many of the parishes of Chicago, many of them in Negro neighborhoods. It was prepared for those attending the Conference on Adult Catechetics at Chicago in 1960.

YOUR AIM

- not just to impart information to curious inquirers
- your job is to teach
- to try to convert people who otherwise might lose their souls
- so don't teach religion in vacuo
- move your listeners to Christian living

MECHANICS OF THE CLASS

- class twice a week at 7:30 P. M.
- 25 to 30 lessons
- run a morning or afternoon class, or both, if necessary
- each class lasts an hour and a half
- first half-hour is for announcements and review
- second part (one hour) is for the new lesson
- two priests, if possible, run the class
- one takes the review part (half hour)
- the other takes the new lesson (one hour)
- during the review, the other priest interviews his people
- the priest who ran the review interviews his people while the other gives the lesson
- people are divided alphabetically

- each priest is responsible for his own group
- records of attendance
 - name, address, phone number, etc.
 - results of interviews
 - marriage status, children, Mass attendance, etc.
- each person registers for each class
- have secretaries to record attendance
- on Monday ask about Mass

THE REVIEW

- most important part of class
- announcements first
- repeat hours and days of class
- no charge or collections
- get a catechism
- bring it to class every time
- be on time (always start on time!)
- don't miss any classes
- bring your relatives and neighbors
- Mass every Sunday
- no meat on Friday (explain why)
- how to act in church (holy water, genuflect, etc.)
- ask any questions
- we'll give you an honest answer
- quiz on previous lessons
- don't pick on individuals
- get the whole class to answer in unison

- try to get one-word answers
- no tricky questions
- simple, simple, simple, simple!!
- don't give them a rehash of previous lessons
- ask them questions and make them answer
- quiz teaches you how to speak their language
- and whether you are going over
- just don't repeat the previous lesson
- take the important questions of all previous lessons
- repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat

THE LESSON

- prepare!!
- people are going to listen to you for an hour
- figure out the main points of the lesson
- think how to put them across
- you're trying to sell a precious product
- show them why they need this product
- be alive, move!
- use the blackboard often
- smile a lot
- don't think you can just go through the catechism
- don't think you know it that well
- you've got to have a well-organized talk
- not a lecture
- but a teaching lesson
- a lesson that should move them to better living
- give them motives, reasons
- shake them up a bit
- don't be afraid to let yourself go
- thrill them with the love of God, the beauty of heaven
- make them feel the flames of hell licking their ankles
- you're often dealing with pagans
- who are satisfied with the status quo
- always bring in the mercy and loveliness of God
- a God who is interested in them
- audience participation
- get them to answer obvious questions
- do this all through the lesson
- otherwise they're going to sleep

MATERIAL FOR CLASSES

- blackboard (use it often)
- very few charts (most of them are too complicated)
- filmstrips (good for the Sacraments)
- movies (very few available)
- use any worthwhile device
- but keep it simple

PRAYERS IN CLASS

- show how to make Sign of the Cross
- 2nd class say the Our Father
- after 2nd class always begin and end class with prayer
- end class with the Act of Contrition

QUESTIONS DURING CLASS

- invite questions
- short answers ("We'll see that in a later lesson")
- have a question box near the door

DON'T INVITE

- outside speakers
- they don't know the score

AFTER EACH CLASS

- stand at the exit to say goodbye
- call them by name, shake hands, smile

LET THEM KNOW

- that they can see you at any time to discuss personal problems in perfect confidence

WHEN THEY MISS CLASS

- send out postcards that night
- or use the telephone
- send out Legion of Mary to get chronic missers

WORK AS A TEAM

- go over talks and techniques with the other priest
- criticize each other
- use a tape recorder
- keep working on your talks and techniques
- talk to other priests who have classes and swap ideas, stories, jokes

EXAMINATIONS

- 20 minutes to ½ hour
- private, oral
- no written exams
- oral exams teach you the language of the people
- exams suited to age, education and mental ability of each one
- get lay people to help you examine them on their prayers, how to say the rosary, Way of the Cross, etc.

RECRUITING FOR THE NEW CLASS

- announce date of new class often
- make each one give you names and addresses of 3 non-Catholics
- send out lots of invitations
- keep plugging class from the pulpit and Sunday bulletin

INTERVIEWS

- start interviews at 2nd or 3rd class
- see your people often
- what to say:
 - class twice a week
 - don't miss for any reason
 - Mass every Sunday
 - no meat on Friday
 - bring friends, relatives and neighbors to next class
 - you don't have to become Catholic
 - want to become Catholic? why?
- later on ask about
 - daily prayers, family prayer
 - Mass
 - meat on Friday
 - marriage valid?
 - how is marriage going?
 - if separated, are you keeping company?
 - any habits of serious sin?
- do you have a rosary, missal, scapular medal, sick-call set?
- whom are you going to bring to the new class?
- fill out information for Baptism on a card
- be a good Catholic
 - Confession at least once a month
 - Communion every Sunday
 - never miss Mass
 - join parish societies
 - bring others to instruction class
- don't neglect to be confirmed
- if you move, let us know
- register in new parish right away
- interview your people very often
- don't be afraid to ask about their personal life
- they won't be embarrassed
- they won't be embarrassed because they figure everyone is asked the same questions
- you've got to know whether they are worthy of Baptism
- unless they give up sin (e.g. birth control, sinful company-keeping, excessive drinking, etc.) they can't be baptized
- get information about other members of family to be baptized
- tell them about released-time classes for their children
- get the name of the sponsor for Baptism
- good Catholic?

BAPTISMS

- baptize them as a group—practice and Profession the night before
- have several priests help
- one priest reads all the prayers from the pulpit

WATCH OUT FOR

- the Bible quoter
- the person who simply comes to argue
- you're there to teach, not argue
- if he gets the upper hand, he can make you look silly
- he is not sincere or honest
- giggling teenagers
- hecklers
- the show-off

BE INTERESTING

- use jokes, plenty of them
- jokes about yourself and the other priest
- lots of jokes the first night
- always localize them
- when you see them wandering, tell a joke
- use a joke to break tension
- have plenty of stories
- dramatize them
- Gospel stories always appeal
- you've got to be interesting or they won't come back
- refer often to their troubles
- sympathize with them
- show them how this lesson can make life easier, happier, fuller
- “It's a terrible shame that you've been cheated all these years”
- “How good God is to bring you to these classes”

VOCABULARY

- use only words that people use in conversation
- use them only in the sense they understand
- don't use anglicized Latin words
 - say SORROW instead of CONTRITION
 - UNLIMITED instead of INFINITE
 - FORGIVENESS instead of REMISSION
- use common words
 - don't say “endeavor” when you mean “try”
 - “shun” for “stay away from”
 - “cease” for “stop”
- don't use words which have an entirely different meaning than the one you intend e.g. “pain” when you mean “penalty” (pain of mortal sin)
- where you must employ a technical word, define it

ROAD BLOCKS

The very size and impersonal air of the Catholic Church in America are not least among the obstacles standing in the way of many non-Catholics, clergy and laymen, seriously interested in the Church. The average non-Catholic clergyman seldom has more than five to eight hundred persons in his congregation. He knows his people and the people know him. A spirit of community exists among them. . . .

No Catholic, born and raised in the Church, can appreciate the shock his non-Catholic friend receives when he attends Mass for the first time. The devout non-Catholic, Anglican or Orthodox Christian thinks of the worship of God as something which is *done* by all the faithful. Here he finds Catholics apparently attending Mass as one attends the theater, using little "programs" to follow the action which takes place before them.

He does not know of the intense devotion of Catholics which penetrates the heart of the Mass despite the ceremonial and linguistic difficulties; he does not know of the burning desire of the Popes for the more active participation of the laity (if he did, he would undoubtedly say something uncharitable about the seeming unwillingness of the clergy to co-operate with the Holy Father) nor does he know, except by happy accident, of those parishes where pastor and people work to achieve the liturgical aims of the Holy See. . . .

The inarticulateness of the average Catholic layman, his inability to communicate his Faith, is another difficulty on the road to Rome. How self-conscious Catholics would become if they only knew how little their non-Catholic neighbors understand them! The non-Catholic layman thinks that fear alone is the motivation for a Catholic's observance of his Church's law. All the Protestant sees is the Catholic practicing his religion as a kind of onerous duty.

Of course, every non-Catholic knows some bad Catholics. Every Catholic who drinks too much, tells an off-color story, gets involved in a shady deal, or consents in some other way to the world, the flesh and the devil, not only damages his own soul, but also obstructs the way of those who are seeking the Faith which he professes and fails to practice. . . .

Unfortunately, the veneration of the Saints, particularly of the Blessed Virgin, as it is practiced by many Catholics strikes the average Protestant as mere idolatry and superstition. The cult of the Saints, as practiced by some well-meaning but ill-informed Catholics sometimes takes on a quality of non-Christian superstition.

Harold R. Bronx, Jr. *The Sign*,
November, 1959

GUIDE

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GUIDE

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Guide Lights

NUNS AND CONVERSIONS . . .

Winning converts depends greatly on the zeal of the laity. And since the formation of an apostolic laity is largely in the hands of our teaching Sisters, the apostolate, to non-Catholics must win the support of all the nuns in all our schools.

Father Joseph B. Collins, S.S., National director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and of its Apostolate of Good Will, recently discussed this theme with 600 Sisters at the CCD Institute at the College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minn. The institute was sponsored by the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, Congregation of our Lady of Lourdes, Rochester, Minn., under the direction of Mother M. Callista.

Father Collins developed themes that should be made clear to Catholic pupils. He stressed the need of prayer for the grace of conversions; meeting the non-Catholic mind; how to discuss religion; and the apostolate of good example. Other suggestions for future apostles of good will were: the distribution of Catholic literature; inviting non-Catholics to Catholic services and parish inquiry classes; participation in census work; discussion clubs and the aftercare of converts. The Sisters were delighted and discovered an area of Catholic formation that is insufficiently emphasized.

FOR YOUR NOTEBOOK . . .

Mr. William Kernan had been an Episcopalian minister in a church at Scarsdale, New York. Alarmed at Communist influence in our schools, he became friendly with Mr. and Mrs. Fitzpatrick who shared his misgivings. This led to frequent discussions which often developed into an exchange of views on religion. The minister had already pondered deeply over the nature of sin and he was puzzled over many aspects of God and His relations to man. The Fitzpatrick's, when they became better acquainted with the former minister, loaned him books and pamphlets on the topics in which he manifested interest. One day, Mrs. Fitzpatrick offered him a rosary, suggesting that he ask the intercession of the Mother of Christ for light on the problems which perplexed him.

Sometime afterwards, the former clergyman consulted a priest. And in a matter of months, Mr. Kernan, with his wife and

six children, were received into the Church. One of his sons is now a seminarian at Maryknoll. In a recent lecture in Cleveland, Mr. Kernan explained his conversion in this way: "I became a Catholic eight years ago because the Holy Ghost and some neighbors named Fitzpatrick had their eyes on me."

CATHOLIC PRESS AND THE NON-CATHOLIC COMMUNITY . . .

Catholic conventions increasingly include a section on some phase of the Church and its relations with our non-Catholic neighbors. The recent Eastern Regional Catholic Press Convention in New York, discussed "How the Catholic Newspaper and Magazine Editor Can Influence the non-Catholic Community." Under the general chairmanship of Rev. Kevin Lynch, C.S.P., Editor of *Information*, a panel of experts—some of them non-Catholics—reviewed some major tensions between Catholics and American non-Catholics.

Participating in this highly illuminating discussion were: Mr. Wayne Cowan, Managing Editor of *Christianity and Crisis*; Miss Joanne Price, Religious News Editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*; Mr. George Connell, Religious News Editor of The Associated Press; and Rev. John B. Sheerin, C.S.P., Editor of *The Catholic World*.

BOUQUETS . . .

• To Bishop Charles H. Helmsing of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri, for organizing "Operation Understanding" in the Ozarks where attacks upon the Church have recently been so violent. The project was conducted by the diocesan council of Catholic Men. Teams of laymen were especially trained in a series of five meetings to give "simple, non-controversial explanations of the Catholic church edifice and its furnishings." All Catholics were asked to extend a personal invitation to their friends and neighbors to visit a Catholic church on a designated Sunday. "In the face of ignorance, misunderstandings and even malicious caricature, no duty appears more urgent than that of making Holy Mother Church known and loved in all her truth and beauty," explained the bishop.

• To Bishop John L. Morkovsky of Amarillo, Texas, for inaugurating a diocesan-wide "truth" advertising campaign to counter the deluge of anti-Catholic literature which swamped this and other sections of the South. Insertion of advertisements were arranged in daily and weekly newspapers of the 73,000 square-mile diocese. Each parish was asked to be responsible for ads in the papers of its area. The ads contained short statements of Catholic truth and offered a correspondence course in Catholic teachings by the diocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

• To Sylvester Farrell of St. Patrick's parish, Oklahoma City, and 60 volunteer workers from other parishes, for sponsoring the Catholic Information Booth at the Oklahoma State Fair. Besides innumerable casual visitors, some 2,200 people stopped to make an extended visit and ask questions. More than 6,000 books and pamphlets were distributed. Many persons, with advanced interest, were directed to local inquiry classes.

• To Bishop William A. Scully of Albany, New York, for his public expression of sympathy on the death of Bishop Frederick L. Barry, Bishop of the Albany Episcopal diocese. "With the death of Bishop Barry, a great loss has been suffered, not only by the members of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, but also by thousands of others throughout this entire region. His wide interest on behalf of his fellow men brought him into contact with leaders in all walks of life. All admired his vision and directness. I will always cherish my own associations with him. To his beloved sister and to his people I extend my sincere sympathy."

• To Cardinal McGuigan of Toronto for his balanced statement of approval regarding the need of "dialogue." "One of the most hopeful signs in the world today is the so-called 'dialogue' between religious bodies. It is sincerely to be hoped that the pattern set by these men of religion may be repeated by other men of good-will in other walks of life, before our civilization destroys itself through perverse ignorance and want of charity. This problem in communication is widespread. The artist does not understand the scientist; management does not understand labor; Christian does not understand Jew. Each group has a special view of things and expresses that view in a special set of terms."

READING PROGRAM . . .

The parish of St. Charles Borromeo in the Harlem district of New York City is an all Negro parish. A visiting priest going

out to the pulpit is discreetly reminded by the missionary-pastor, Monsignor Cornelius J. Drew: "you will talk to a unique congregation, 96 per cent of your listeners are converts." When this section of Harlem turned colored, the priests of a formerly thriving white parish saw a missionary opportunity. They immediately endeavored to win the incoming Negroes to Catholicism. And their perserving efforts were richly blessed.

Up to a decade ago, most of the parishioners were over 35 years of age. But since that time, a younger generation began to make its influence felt. They are now bringing new vision and energy to the needs of an apostolic parish.

Some weeks ago, the young people of the Adult Sodality and their moderator Father Kevin Kelly, considered ways of making Catholic pamphlet literature available for the specific needs of this convert parish. After consultation with Father Alvin Illig, C.S.P., of the National Catholic Reading Distributors, 180 Varick St., New York, plans were devised to install a 4-Publisher Pamphlet Pack Program. This will provide selections from the most appropriate pamphlets published by Ave Maria, Li-guorian, Queen's Work and the Paulist Press.

ECUMENISM IN MONTREAL . . .

Last Easter Monday, twenty Catholic priests and Lutheran, Calvinist and Baptist ministers gathered for a two-day retreat in a monastery in the Nicolet diocese of Quebec. A while back, Father Beaubien, Jesuit director of the well-known Catholic Inquiry Forum in Montreal, had obtained permission to hold meetings between Catholic theologians and theologians of the French-speaking Reformed Churches. These meetings attracted some twenty theologians each month.

Later on, dialogues were started between Catholic and Protestant theologians of the English-speaking communities. One of the members prepares a paper on a point of doctrine or pastoral interest selected in advance by a committee. If time permits, the same topic is treated by a member of the opposite group. This is followed by general discussion. While emphasis is placed upon points of agreement, care is taken to avoid any sort of doctrinal compromise. A secretary takes notes on the discussions and a report is prepared which Father Beaubien presents to Cardinal Leger.

Father Beaubien cautions against optimism or pessimism. "Our task is one of study and prayer, charity and patience. The rest is up to God."

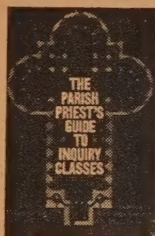
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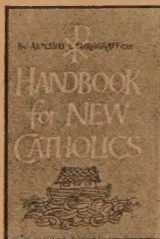
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One of the important functions of this new Institute is to make available, to all those engaged in convert work, an ever-increasing selection of proved-effective materials. To order those listed on this page and the next, please use coupon below.



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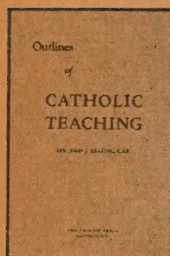
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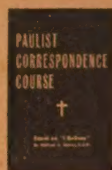
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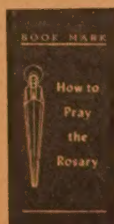
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